ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Disclosed is a method for operating a code division multiple access communications system, and a system that operates in accordance with the method. The method operates within a coverage area of a base station by assigning a set of spreading codes to individual ones of a plurality of subscriber stations and then, during transmissions within the cell, by periodically hopping amongst spreading code within the set of spreading codes such that at any given time no two subscriber stations operate with the same spreading code. The set of spreading codes may include the all one's spreading code. The step of periodically hopping preferably changes from a currently used spreading code to a next spreading code at a symbol rate or at a multiple of the symbol rate. The set of spreading codes may be a hopped sub-set of a larger set of spreading codes, and in this case the method further operates to assign a non-hopped sub-set of the larger set of spreading codes to individual ones of the plurality of subscriber stations for use on a system access channel and/or on a system control channel or, more generally, for use on a non-traffic channel. The system may be a fixed data rate system or a variable data rate system. In the latter case the step of periodically hopping may change from a currently used spreading code to a next spreading code at the symbol rate, or at a multiple of the symbol rate of the lowest or the highest symbol rate users.